

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

LETTER
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

DIRECTED TO

The chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, transmitting a communication from General Grant on Indian affairs.

FEBRUARY 2, 1867.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, February 1, 1867.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the consideration of the committee, a copy of a communication on Indian affairs received this day from General Grant.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War

Hon. R. C. SCHENCK,
Chairman of the Military Committee, House of Representatives.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, D. C., February 1, 1867.

SIR: The enclosed papers, just received from General Sherman, are respectfully forwarded and your special attention invited. They show the urgent necessity for an immediate transfer of the Indian bureau to the War Department and the abolition of the civil Indian agents and licensed traders. If the present practice is to be continued, I do not see that any course is left open to us but to withdraw our troops to the settlements and call upon Congress to provide means and troops to carry on formidable hostilities against the Indians until all the Indians or all the whites on the great plains and between the settlements on the Missouri and the Pacific slope are exterminated.

The course General Sherman has pursued in this matter, in disregarding the permits of Mr. Bogy and others, is just right. I will instruct him to enforce his order until it is countermanded by the President or yourself.

I would also respectfully ask that this matter be placed before the President and his disapproval of licensing the sale of arms to Indians asked.

We have treaties with all tribes of Indians from time to time. If the rule is to be followed that all tribes with which we have treaties and pay annuities can procure such articles without stint or limit, it will not be long before the matter becomes perfectly understood by the Indians and they avail themselves of it to equip perfectly for war. They will get the arms either by making treaties themselves or through tribes who have such treaties.

I would respectfully recommend that copies of the enclosed communications be furnished to the military committee of each house of Congress.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT, *General.*

Hon. E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
St. Louis, Missouri, January 26, 1867.

GENERAL: I have this moment received your letter of January 22, about the sale of arms and ammunition to Indians by traders and agents.

We, the military, are held responsible for the peace of the frontier, and it is an absurdity to attempt it if Indian agents and traders can legalize and encourage so dangerous a traffic. I regard the paper enclosed, addressed to Mr. D. A. Butterfield and signed by Charles Bogy, W. R. Irwin, J. H. Leavenworth, and others, as an outrage upon our rights and supervision of the matter, and I now authorize you to disregard that paper and at once stop the practice, keeping the issues and sales of arms and ammunition under the rigid control and supervision of the commanding officers of the posts and districts near which the Indians are. If the Indian agents may, without limit, supply the Indians with arms, I would not expose our troops and trains to them at all, but would withdraw our soldiers, who already have a herculean task on their hands.

This order is made for this immediate time, but I will, with all expedition, send these papers, with a copy of this, to General Grant, in the hope he will lay it before the President, who alone can control both the War and Indian Departments, under whom, at present, this mixed control of the Indian question now rests in law and practice.

Your obedient servant,

W. T. SHERMAN,
Lieutenant General Commanding.

General W. S. HANCOCK,
*Commanding Department of the Missouri,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.*

FORT ZARAH, KANSAS, *November 15, 1866.*

SIR: You having requested verbally to be informed in regard to your right to sell arms and ammunition to Indians, we have to state as follows: You, as an Indian trader, licensed for that purpose by the United States government, are authorized to trade or sell arms and ammunition to any Indians that are at peace with, and receiving annuities from, the United States government.

This rule, of course, applies to any other regularly licensed Indian traders, as well as yourself.

CHAS. BOGY,
W. R. IRWIN,
Special United States Indian Agents.
J. H. LEAVENWORTH,
*Agent for Kiowas and Comanche Indians
of the Upper Arkansas.*
WM. H. BENT,
E. W. WYNKOOP,
U. S. Indian Agents, Upper Arkansas Agency.

A true copy: *

HENRY ASBURY,
Capt. 3d U. S. Infantry, Bvt. Maj. U. S. A., Com'd'g.
Mr. D. A. BUTTERFIELD, *Present.*